

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ADDIS 00209 150602Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6906

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 0209

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PBOR, PEPR, PDIP, ET, SO, US
SUBJ: MILITARY SPARE PARTS

REF: STATE 011020

1. EMBASSY REALIZES THAT THERE ARE WASHINGTON IMPERATIVES AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS THAT DICATED SECRETARY'S DECISION ON SPARE PARTS AND OTHER MILITARY ITEMS. FOLLOWING COMMENTS THEREFORE INTENDED ONLY TO ADDRESS QUESTION OF HOW BEST TO ADVISE ETHIOPIANS THEREOF.

2. THERE IS NO EXPLANATION THAT WOULD BE PALATABLE TO ETHIOPIANS. AFTER CHARGE TIENKEN INFORMED MOFA PERSEC DAWIT THAT USG AUTHORIZED SHIPMENT OF MILITARY ITEMS AND SPARE PARTS ON WHICH TITLE HAD PASSED, WE LEARNED THROUGH RELIABLE SOURCES THAT DIRG WAS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED AT OUR FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE. WE ADVISED EPMG IN JULY, IN NOVEMBER, AND AGAIN IN DECEMBER TO FONMIN HIMSELF THAT US GOVT HAD APPROVED ITEMS' RELEASE, AND THAT IT WAS ONLY QUESTION TO BE RESOLVED BETWEEN FREIGHT FORWARDER AND EPMG. I HAVE ALSO IN FACT BEEN SEEKING APPOINTMENT WITH FONMIN FELLEKE FOR PAST WEEK TO RAISE WITH HIM SEVERAL ISSUES, INCLUDING ETHIOPIAN ARMY OCCUPATION OF ASMARA CONGEN, AND HAVE ALREADY INDICATED TO MOFA IN THAT CONNECTION THAT WE HAVE AN ANSWER (77 STATE SECRET

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310939 AND STATE 003287) TO FELLEKE'S DEC 22 INQUIRY ABOUT DELAY ON DELIVERY OF SPARE PARTS.

3. DECISION TO HOLD UP DELIVERY WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE INTERPRETED BY ETHIOPIANS AS LATEST AND MOST CLEAR CUT INDICATION THAT US TILTING TOWARD SOMALI SIDE IN WAR, AND THAT DESPITE OUR ASSURANCES IN PAST, WE NEVER MEANT TO DE-

LIVER THESE MILITARY ITEMS AT ALL.

4. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN NO NEW REPERCUSSIONS ON BILATERAL LEVEL SINCE FIRST INDICATIONS DEC 22 THAT SOME AT LEAST IN DIRG, AND/OR FOREIGN POWERS CLOSE THERETO, WERE CONSIDERING MOVES TO REDUCE FURTHER OR EVEN ELIMINATE AMERICAN OFFICIAL PRESENCE IN ADDIS, WEST GERMANS HAVE BEEN HIT RATHER BADLY, PAST TWO WEEKS. FRG EMBASSY IS CONVINCED THAT EPMG ACTIONS IN TAKING OVER AND CLOSING GERMAN SCHOOL AND IN ORDERING CLOSURE OF DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE CAME IN LARGE MEASURE AS RESULT OF PRESSURES EXERTED ON DIRG BY SOVIETS AND EAST GERMANS. THEY SEE THIS AS PART OF CONCERTED WARSAW PACT SCHEME TO EXACERBATE FRIENDLY WESTERN COUNTRIES TO POINT WHERE THOSE COUNTRIES IN TURN WILL TAKE RETALIATORY ACTIONS, THEREBY WEAKENING FURTHER ETHIOPIA'S TIES TO WEST AND PUSHING HER MORE IRREVOCABLY INTO ARMS OF SOVIETS.

5. SHARP TASS REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S JAN 12 STATEMENT TO PRESS LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT SOVIETS WILL POUNCE ON THIS NEW US DECISION ON SPARE PARTS TO ARGUE WITH EPMG THAT, BY HOLDING UP ITS OWN OUTSTANDING DELIVERIES AND CONSTANTLY OPPOSING SOVIET-CUBAN PROVISION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA, US HAS GIVEN ALL THE PROOF NEEDED THAT IT DOES NOT WANT ETHIOPIA TO WIN WAR AND THAT IT FAVORS AN OUTCOME CHORT OF FULL RESTORATION OF BORDERS. MOFA STATEMENT OF JAN 14 (FULL TEXT, RECEIVED AFTER DRAFTING ABOVE, AND COMMENTS WILL SECRET

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FOLLOW SEPTTEL) IS ONLY LATEST EVIDENCE THAT SUCH ARGUMENTS FALL ON RECEPTIVE EARS.

6. WE SHALL OF COURSE DELIVER TEXT DEPT JAN 14 PRESS STATEMENT TO MOFA FIRST THING JAN 15. WE ARE ALSO CONVINCED THAT IT WOULD BE FAR BETTER FOR EPMG TO LEARN ABOUT SPARE PARTS DECISION DIRECTLY FROM US GOVT, RATHER THAN FROM FREIGHT FORWARDER OR AS RESULT PRESS REPORTS. (IN THAT LATTER CONNECTION, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW WHETHER PRESS IS PURSUING SPARE PARTS QUESTION IN WASHINGTON AND ARE LIKELY TO GET HOLD OF STORY FROM ONE OF INTERESTED PARTIES.) ON OTHER HAND, IT SEEMS TO US THAT FOR US TO MAKE JAN 14 PRESS STATEMENT AVAILABLE ONE DAY AND PROCEED WITH REFTEL DEMARCHE THE NEXT WILL, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, STRAIN OUR CREDIBILITY IN ETHIOPIAN EYES TO POINT WHERE THEY MAY POSSIBLY CHOP EMBASSY STAFF FURTHER OR EVEN GO WHOLE WAY OF BREAKING RELATIONS. THEY MAY DO THAT ANYWAY, BUT BLOW MIGHT BE CUSHIONED SOMEWHAT BY DELAYING DEMARCHE FOR FEW DAYS. OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, WE WOULD RECOMMEND SUCH DELAY. DEMARCHE TEXT ITSELF IS PROBABLY AS GOOD A PRESENTATION AS WE CAN MAKE OF DECISION, REASONS FOR WHICH EPMG WON'T BELIEVE ANYWAY. MATHERON

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NNN

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